



"A sense of humor... is needed armor. Joy in one's heart and some laughter on one's lips is a sign that the person down deep has a pretty good grasp of life." - Hugh Sidey

The summer season seems to bring out the fun side of most of us. We have more energy, we laugh more, we socialize more and we appear to be more carefree. Does this positive energy carry over into your workplace? And can it be maintained year-round? Studies have shown that when people have fun on the job, they're more creative, more productive and there's less conflict in the workplace.

Most of you have heard about the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle where their commitment to having fun in the workplace is part of what makes them world famous! Whether it's throwing fish or bringing a customer behind the counter for some "on the job training," they interact with people with the intent of making a difference for each and every one, and to make the world a better place. (For more information go to www.pikeplacefish.com)

Southwest Airlines has long been known for having fun with their work. When Herb Kelleher became chairman in 1978 he made their "People Department" responsible for hiring people with a sense of humor. In the book, "Nuts! Southwest Airlines' Crazy Recipe for Business and Personal Success," it says "their recruiting and hiring practices are built on the premise that humor can help people thrive during change, remain creative under pressure, work more effectively, play more enthusiastically and stay healthier in the process."

In the mid-nineties, after 4 years of winning the "Triple Crown" for best on-time performance, fewest customer complaints and smallest number of mishandled bags, Southwest retired its formal uniform. Casual wear of khaki shorts, polo shirts and tennis shoes has remained their choice. They believe that when they dress in a fun style their work becomes enjoyable rather than merely tolerable. That makes the job worth holding onto and the employees are more inclined to take ownership of their responsibilities and go above and beyond to do whatever it takes. (See their flight attendant doing raps at www.youtube.com/watch)

These are just a couple of the stories about successful companies that profit from having their own style of fun at work. To read more about the benefits of having fun in your workplace go to www.workplaceissues.com/arhumor.htm and read Mary Rau-Foster's article "Humor and Fun in the Workplace."